

CANCER

Arizona Department of Corrections
Health Service Bureau

Inmate Wellness Program
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Your body is made up of cells. As cells grow older and die, they are replaced by new cells. Sometimes these new cells grow out of normal shape or form. These abnormal cells may grow out of control and develop into masses of tissue called tumors. Some of these tumors may become cancerous and others may not. Cancerous tumors are called malignant and non-cancerous tumors are called benign.

Malignant cancer cells develop the ability to spread to other parts of the human body. This is called metastasis. The danger when cancer cells metastasize, is that they invade and destroy normal organs and tissue in the body. If not treated, cancer may spread throughout the body and can cause death.

TYPES OF CANCER: There are many different types of cancer. Some of the most common types of cancer are Lung, Breast, Prostate, Colo-Rectal, and Skin Cancer. Lung cancer is more common in males, while breast cancer is more commonly found in females. Cancer of the colon/rectum is equally common in both males and females.

CAUSES OF CANCER:

There are many different factors that can cause or lead to the development of cancer. Examples of some of the **RISK FACTORS** are:

- Alcohol - Oral cancer and cancer of the voice box, throat, esophagus and liver occur more often in people who are heavy drinkers and who also smoke cigarettes and chew tobacco.
- Cigarette smoking - Smoking is responsible for 90% of lung cancers in men and 79% among women.
- Tobacco chewing – Increases the risk of oral cancers such as cancer of the mouth, lips and jaw.
- Chemical exposure - Coming into contact with certain types of chemicals whether by touching, eating, and/or breathing can cause certain types of cancer.
- Ultraviolet radiation - Skin cancers can be common in people exposed to excessive sunlight.
- Genetic factors/family history of cancer - Reporting a strong history of cancer in your family can be very helpful to your medical provider in figuring out your risks for cancer.
- Long term viral Infections - May cause the immune system to not work right, adding to the formation of cancerous cells.

For example: Hepatitis B infection can be linked to cancer of the liver. Herpes Simplex II viral infection and other Sexually transmitted Diseases can be linked to Cervical Cancer.

SYMPTOMS: Cancer, especially in the early stages, may have no noticeable symptoms. It is important to notice signs of cancer as early as possible. The American Cancer Society gives seven warning signs for cancer:

- Change in bowel or bladder habits
- Sore that does not heal
- Unusual bleeding or discharge
- Thickening or lump in the breast or elsewhere
- Indigestion or difficulty in swallowing
- Obvious change in a wart or mole
- Nagging cough or hoarseness

None of these warning signs is a sure sign of cancer, but they are clues that something could be wrong. If you have one of these warning signs, see your health care provider. Pain is seldom an early sign of cancer-don't wait for pain if other symptoms don't go away.

SCREENING/DETECTION:

Your health care provider can help you in figuring out what types of cancer screening/detection are needed and available.

Prevention

- Maintain a healthy weight. People 40% or more overweight have an increased risk of Colon, Breast, Prostate, Gallbladder, Ovary and Uterine Cancers.
- Limit your drinking of alcohol.
- Stop smoking and chewing tobacco.
- Use sun screen or protective clothing when exposed to excessive sunlight.

TREATMENT: Cancer can be treated in a variety of ways. Removal of the tumor; radiation treatments to shrink the size of the tumor; and drugs (Chemotherapy) or a combination of the above are currently available for the treatments of cancers. Doctors called Oncologists (cancer specialists) determine the types of treatments for the different types of cancers. For best results, follow your providers recommendations.

For most people, the word cancer is a frightening term. Fight those fears by talking to your health care provider to get more information. In many cases, cancer, when caught in early stages, is a treatable disease.